teousneſs ſake.

A SERMON

Preach'd before Her

MAJESTY

AT

St. *James's* CHAPPEL:

On *Sunday December* the 26*th*, 1708.

Being St. *Stephen's* MARTYRDOM.

MAT. V. 10, 11, 12.

Bleſſed are they which are perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Bleſſed are ye when Men ſhall revile you, and perſecute you, and ſay all manner of evil againſt you falſly for my ſake.

Rejoyce and be exceeding glad, for great is your Reward in Heaven: for ſo perſecuted they the Prophets which were before you.

By *Lancelot Blackburn*, Dean of *Exeter*, and Chaplain in Ordinary to Her Majeſty.

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TO mention *the Caſe of ſuffering Perſecution for Righteouſneſs ſake*, while we are protected by wholeſome Laws in the full and quiet Enjoyment of that Holy Religion, and thoſe valuable Rights and Liberties which they ſecure to us; to propoſe the Encouragements, or lay down the Duties which attend or relate to that uncomfortable Condition, to a People Exalted with Succeeſſes, big with growing Hopes, and and at reſt in a full Indulgence of every ſort of Liberty, which a Mild and Gracious Government can wiſely grant, or Honeſt Reaſonable Men deſire, might ſeem at beſt an unſeaſonable or uſeleſs Employment; if there were not *Perſecutions* within the Bounds of Laws, and therefore not to be prevented by them, which will conſtantly affect us *as Men*, and *as Chriſtians*; if there were not *Sufferings for Righteouſneſs ſake*, which may reach us as a *People*, either thro' our inteſtine Diviſions, or our open Enemies, from which the moſt zealous *Defender* of our *Religion*, and of our *Rights*, may not always be able to ſecure us, without our ſteady adherence to thoſe *Duties* which that *Caſe* requires, and ought to ſuggeſt to us; if a conſtant and firm *Preparation of Mind* toward

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the resolute Practice of the *Duties of that State* were not always necessary to us in both Respects; and if the *Memorial* of the blessed Martyr of this Day, St. *Stephen*, did not of it self account for the Propriety of the Mediation.

He was the first who had the Honour to *suffer for the Son of Righteousness*, and therefore stands the foremost in the bloody List of Holy Martyrs and Confessors, who, with the *Captain of their Salvation, were perfected thro' Sufferings.*

But the Instance of that Holy Martyr, cut off in the beginning of his Race, and consequently unexercis'd in many kinds of Sufferings which awaited those whom he left behind him to pursue it thro' them all, is of too narrow an Influence, and uncommon use to confine our Meditations. I presume to mention it upon this Occasion, only to awaken our Attention to a wider Scene of Duty, and a Stock of Consolations, which he was not permitted the repeated Exercise or Need of, and which these Words of our Blessed Saviour open to us.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for Righteousness sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Blessed are ye when Men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsly for my sake.

Rejoyce and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in Heaven: for so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you.

The Words therefore I may beg leave to tell you, were design'd by our blessed Saviour to afford abundance of Encouragement and Comfort to a Condition that needs it much, and is very uncomfortable in it self.

Enjoyment is the Aim and the Pursuit of every Creature, cut short and streighten'd, as it is here, by the Divine Prohibitions: restrain'd and cramp'd by Human Laws: thwarted continually by the Interfering Interests of equal Pretenders, and defeated often by the common Accidents of Life; Men hardly

bear the leaſt Encroachment on that poor remainder of it, that is left to make their courſe of Life run ſmoothly on, with ſome degree of Indolence, if not complacency. But when thoſe Encroachments grow in Weight or Number, when they are attended with Inflictions, with Pain and Sufferings unprovok'd and undeſerv'd, their Impatience naturally riſes high, and ſwells to the utmoſt degree of Indignation.

How difficult is it then to perſuade 'em to a *Scene of Life*, and to a ſteady *Courſe of Action* whoſe natural Tendency is to *provoke theſe Sufferings*? What Perſuaſions are ſufficient to induce, what Examples to invite, what Rewards to encourage them to it?

This is what the Son of God here takes upon him to do, with all the Power of *Example*, with all the Force of *Reaſon*, and with all the *promiſing Aſſurances* that can be requiſite to ſo difficult an Attempt.

The *Reward* is *great in the Kingdom of Heaven.* The *Example* ſufficiently *Encourageing*, in the *like uſage of the Prophets that went before us* We have only to ſuſpend a while the Tryal of their *Force* upon us, till we have conſider'd.

I. *What is Perſecution?* which will ſhew us *who* they are that *are Perſecuted.* And

II. *When* we may be ſaid to be *Perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake*; which will alſo lead us to the *Duties* that are requiſite to *that State.*

Now *Perſecution* ſeems to me to be an *Abuſe of Power* employ'd to the *Harm* of another, with ſomething of *Eagerneſs*, *Purſuit* and *Perſeverance.* The Nature of the Thing, and the Force of the Word together, ſeem to give us this full Account of it.

Power is of it ſelf *indifferent* to *good* or *ill* Uſe, tho' given Originally by God, entruſted or reſerv'd by Men for good alone. And therefore *wherever* the *Seat of Power is*, to what Degree ſoever its Capacity extends, to that Degree there may be alſo the *Seat of Perſecution. Wherever* there is *an Inlet to the Inſults of Power*, to what

Degree,

Degree ſoever *the Breach* lies open, to that Degree *there* may be alſo the *Seat of Suffering*.

On this *Account* it is that the *Supremacy of Power* it ſelf is not exempt from *Perſecution*. Far be it from me, but to ſuppoſe a *Right* of *Perſecuting* it; The very Notion of *Perſecution* implies *Unrighteouſneſs*. But as no Power, beſides God's, is infinite or perfect; ſo where-ever there is an imperfection of Power, there is alſo a Breach open for the Aſſaults of it. And as no Mortal is ſo weak, ſo wholly deſtitute of Power, but that he has where withal to be ſome way or other upon the Offenſive; ſo there is no one, therefore, who in his turn is not ſome way or other capable of Perſecution.

To give an Inſtance in one kind of it, which the Text it ſelf takes Notice of. The meaneſt Vaſſals upon Earth can have the Inſolence to ſay, *with our Tongue we will prevail; our Lips are our own, who is Lord over us?* And I wiſh the Practice of them too did not too often verifie it to a Demonſtration.

With whatever Priviledges of Exemption, therefore we may flatter our ſelves, or others; *Perſecution* is what ſome way or other, from the Higheſt to the Loweſt, all of us lie open to. To our unſpeakable *Comfort* it is under the Approach or Aſſaults of it, if we can pretend to thoſe Circumſtances which are requiſite to make good our *Claim* to the High *Rewards* that do attend it.

When we may be ſaid therefore to be *perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake*, is the next thing that it concerns us to inquire into; which will lead us alſo to the *Duties* of *that State*.

For the *Reward* of *Perſecution* is not the eaſy Prize of puniſh'd Wickedneſs, or heady obſtinate Opiniatrety. They are *Bleſſed* only *who are perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake; whom Men ſhall Revile and Perſecute, and ſay all manner of evil againſt, falſly, for Chriſt's ſake*, on the account of Perſecution; *Their Reward alone is great in Heaven.*

Now Men may *be ſaid to ſuffer Perſecution* for *Righteouſneſs ſake*, when they ſuffer *for doing the Duties of their Stations*; not in thoſe *Acts* alone which reſpect the *Faith and Worſhip of God*, (tho' in thoſe more eſpecially) but *throughout the whole Stage of Chriſtian Virtue*; as *Princes*, as *Magiſtrates*, as *Subjects*, as *Chriſtians*.

When a *Prince* is made uneaſy and obſtructed by Potent Factions in the Righteous Government of an unruly People; when the wiſeſt Deſigns for the Publick Good are either directly oppos'd, or Artificially fruſtrated; when the publick Acts of Government, or ſecret Intentions in them, are by the Arts of diſſatisfied and wicked Men, blaſted with ſuch Jealouſies, or poiſon'd with ſuch Colours, as tend to eat out that Duty and Affection which is honeſtly due from the Hearts of the Subjects. Then is that *Prince* as truly *Perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake*, as if ſome mighty *Nimrod* of the Earth in his Thirſt after Empire, ſhou'd with a Torrent of War over-bear the *rightful Power* at once, and level the *Throne* with the common duſt.

When a *Magiſtrate* finds a Weight thrown in the Scales of Juſtice, and the furious power of Parties forceing in bears heavy on his Hands; when he is delay'd in the execution of it by the tedious Art of Forms, wiſely contriv'd at firſt for ſteady Guards to Juſt and Right, but wrapp'd by paſſing through ill Hands, and growing Gains, to a more lingring Torment than the certain Wrongs, Remedyleſs and Deſperate: When his Righteous Sentence is call'd to the private Bar of every Querelous, Intereſted, or partially Pragmatical pretender; then is *that Magiſtrate* as truly *Perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake*, as if the Sword of Violence invaded the Bench it ſelf, and made a common Sacrifice of Judge and Law together.

When a *Faithful Subject* is traduc'd as Undutiful to his Prince, for confining his Services to thoſe Bounds which the Laws of God and Man have preſcrib'd to 'em; or his ſubmiſſion and Deference, within thoſe Bounds, is

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repreſented odiouſly to the people, as propenſity to Slavery: When his good Deeds are ſpitifully leſſen'd and undervalu'd, or more skilfully aſcrib'd to ill Ends; and the juſt Eſteem or Reward of them are intercepted, or loaded with an unequal Stock of Envy and Malice, and that courſe Detraction which uſually follows: In a word, whenever he ſuffers in his Goods, or Good Name, for adhering unmoveably to that even Courſe of Duty which our excellent Conſtitution does exact, eſpecially, from that ſtate of Subjection which he is happily plac'd in; Then is *that Subject* as truly *perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake*, as if his Perſon and his Liberties were trampl'd under foot.

When a Man's Sobriety, and Conſcientiouſneſs, is traduc'd as preciſeneſs; his Love of Order, and Decency, as Superſtition; his firm Adherence to well eſtabliſh'd Principles, as Stifneſs, and Bigottry, and Narrowneſs of Mind; his true and unaffected Moderation in Things diſputed, as Indifference for the Truth of them; or his Zeal for ſettled Truths, as the very Spirit of Perſecution: Then is that *Chriſtian* as truly *perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake*, as if he was driven to the woful Choice of giving up either his Bible, or his Body to be Burnt; of either Sacrificing, or being Sacrific'd to Idols.

I chooſe the rather to inſtance in *theſe kinds of Perſecutions* becauſe they are ſo much of common uſe and practice, and come ſo thick upon *good Men* from all Quarters, that it ſeems out of the power of the wiſeſt Laws, or the ſtricteſt Execution of them, by any Method of Contrivance, or Application to prevent 'em.

The more *Bloody Perſecutions* that lay waſte whole Provinces, and make a general Havock of the Lives and Liberties of a People, are not the work of every Age or Country. Monſtrous as they are in their Nature, ſo are they in their Rarity too: Wide as they are in their waſteful Inundations, yet the Goodneſs of God has ever ſet ſome Bounds to 'em,

which they could not paſs; has *ſhut up that Sea* of Blood *with Doors*, and ſaid, *Hitherto ſhalt thou come, and no farther; and here ſhall thy proud Waves be ſtay'd.* For it is the Care and the Delight of the good Providence of God to Blaſt the Deſigns of Cruel Princes; to Humble that Haughty and Inſulting Spirit, which puts 'em upon being the Plagues of Mankind: and to Relieve, in his own good Time, the Righteous Sufferers under their mercileſs Perſecutions,

But the *Perſecutions* of *Malice* and *Defamation*, the *Revilings*, the *Evil-ſpeakings*, that attend and purſue the ſteady practice of every Chriſtian Virtue, in every ſort of Station, are the growth of every Time and Corner of the world; and as ſurely the Lot of every Good and Righteous Man, as they are beyond the niceſt Care of his utmoſt Circumſpection to prevent or cure. Even the higheſt *ſeeming Commendations* in the Mouths of Men, skill'd in the Art of *crafty Slander*, when the Heat of their wicked Rage is ſo far under Command, as to give 'em leave to be *Cool* in their *Malice*, and *deliberately Spitful*; ſhall cut ſharper, and wound deper than the keeneſt Satyr, and make the more laſting and unmovable Impreſſions, for the falſe Diſguiſe and rotten Affectation of Impartiality and Temper. *Their Lips drop as an Honeycomb, and their Mouth is ſmoother than Oil: But their End is bitter as Wormwood, and ſharp as a two-edged Sword.*

It is time then to make good our Way to the high *Rewards* and *Comforts* of This defenceleſs *State*, thro' the *Duties* which it requires at our Hands.

Some would indeed perſuade us not to look for *Duty* here, ſince it is not in our Power whether we ſhall be Perſecuted or not; and rather to keep our *Eye* on the *Rewards* and *Conſolations*, which are to ſupport us in our *Sufferings for Righteouſneſs ſake*, when they do befal us. and we cannot help it; than to *Provoke* thoſe *Sufferings*, and pull 'em down upon our Heads, in proſpect of a Prize which we have no Encouragement or Ground to

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hope ſhall be the *Crown* of (what they will call) our *Raſhneſs* and *Inconſideration.*

But beſides that, I muſt profeſs I know not of any *Goſpel Comfort* or *Reward*, which has not ſome relation to a *Goſpel Duty*; beſides that, I have, I think, evinc'd already, that theſe *Sufferings* are the *Lot* of every *good Man*, and unavoidably follow the ſteady Practice of the regular Duties of every Station. It appears alſo yet farther to me, from the whole Tenour of the Goſpel, That we are not only bound to *purſue that Track of Duty* wherein we ſee *theſe Sufferings* will await us; but that we are alſo often ty'd to *enter into it*, even with that *very View* and *Proſpect.*

This is what our Saviour means by that Saying of his in the 9th of St. *Luke*, at the 23d Verſe: *If any Man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his Croſs daily and follow me.* Where what we are to do day by day, ought to be in our own Power; and therefore, muſt certainly ſignify to be in ſome Senſe *Active*, ſome way to contribute to our Croſs; and that we may do, either by *Confeſſion of the Mouth*, or by *Practice.*

By *Confeſſion* I mean a clear and open Profeſſion of our Belief, tho' we foreſee it will bring Danger upon us unavoidably. Whenever we ſhall diſcern that by our Silence, or Diſguiſing our Judgment in things of common Duty, the Name of Chriſt is likely to be diſhonour'd, or our Neighbour's Soul endanger'd; we are bound to ſpeak, tho' we ſuffer for it all that the ſnarling Rage, or active Cruelty of wicked Men can bring upon us.

By *Practice* I mean an Exemplary *Pious Life*, directly ſet in daily Oppoſition to the common Courſes of the wicked World; by which we ſurely bring upon our ſelves *Reviling*, *Hatred* and *Injurious* Dealing from the moſt of Men, as ſuch who by our Lives condemn their wicked Doings. For *they think it ſtrange*, ſays St. *Peter*, 1 Pet. 4. 4. *That you run not with them to the ſame exceſs of Riot, ſpeaking Evil of you.* And the Courſe of their Reaſoning

ſoning is excellently deſcrib'd in the ſecond Chapter of the Book of *Wiſdom*.

Let us lie in wait for the Righteous, ſays the wicked Man there, *for he is not for our Turn, and he is clean contrary to our Doings. He upbraids us with our offending the Law, and objects to our Infamy the Tranſgreſſions of our Education. He was made to reprove our Thoughts, He is grievous to us even to behold. For his Life is not like other Mens, his ways are of another faſhion. We are eſteem'd of him as Counterfeits: He abſtains from our Ways as from Filthineſs; He pronounceth the End of the Juſt to be Bleſſed. Let us therefore*, ſays he, *examine him with Deſpitefulneſs and Torture, let us condemn him with a ſhameful Death.*

Theſe are the *Acts of taking up the Croſs*, the Duties which put us in the Number of the Perſons deſign'd in the Text, *thoſe that are perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake*. For 'tis a ſhame that our Bleſſing ſhould be inflicted on us, and that we ſhould be only Paſſive in our Happineſs: Let us inquire a little more diſtinctly into the Senſe which our great Maſter hath of their Performance.

That kind of *Suffering* which is on the Account of a ſteady *Perſeverance in Chriſtian Piety and Vertue*, is call'd in Scripture, *Suffering with Chriſt*, and *Dying with Chriſt*, *the Dying of the Lord Jeſus*. Now if when we ſuffer, we ſuffer with him, He ſuffers in our Sufferings; if we bear in our Bodies his Dying; his are all thoſe Sufferings which we bear for his Names ſake. So we find Him pronouncing from Heaven, the Seat of his Glory, after his Perſonal Sufferings on Earth were finiſh'd: *When Saul was breathing out Slaughter againſt the Diſciples of the Lord*, Saul, Saul, ſays he, *why Perſecuteth thou me?*

And can we then believe thoſe Sufferings fit for us to decline the Weight of which the Shoulders of the Son of God are under, and help us to ſuſtain? *We ſuffer with him.* Can we deſpair of the glorious Reward of thoſe Sufferings, which the Saviour of the World expreſly tells us, in a Voice from Heaven, that he himſelf is involv'd in? *It is the dying of the Lord Jeſus.*

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On the other hand, the being *affrighted* from *taking up the Cross* in an Exemplary Oppolition to the reigning Impieties of the wicked World, he call's *being aſham'd of him, and his Words, in this Adulterous and ſinful Generation.*

In an Age of Monſters, when ſtrict Piety and honeſt Quietneſs is out of countenance; and bold Wickedneſs, deſperate Atheiſm, and heady Faction carry all before 'em: He that by an open courſe of Honeſty and Virtue dares not own the ſcornful Name of a Religious Man; that will be yielding in his Compliances, and counterfeit ſome faſhionable Opinion, or Vice, to be eaſy in Company, and Converſation; he that dares not clearly and firmly profeſs and maintain the Truth of that Faith and thoſe Principles, of whoſe Agreement with the Doctrine of the Holy Scriptures, and the Practice of the Primitive Church, he has had a long and ſettled Conviction upon his Conſcience; He it is that is *aſham'd of Chriſt in his Words*: And the Reward he is to expect, is this; That *of him alſo ſhall the Son of Man be aſhamed, when he comes in the Glory of the Father with his Holy Angels.*

The *not confeſſing him before Men*, our Saviour alſo calls *denying him*; and the Puniſhment of the guilty Cowards is, that *he will deny them before his Father which is in Heaven.*

Vain therefore, is the falſe Confidence of thoſe wary Men, who think if they can cover their Opinions in matters of Conſcience with Silence, or with Words which diſcovers their Judgments, yet leſs than Silence, ſo as to preſerve themſelves from open Danger, and apparent Sin; they are abundantly Innocent! The Judgment Seat of Chriſt will take Cognizance of no ſuch Niceties. He reckons *Silence*, to avoid any kind of Affliction whatever, when *Confeſſion* is requir'd either by Duty to the Magiſtrate, or by Charity to our Neighbour, or by the bold and inſolent Oppoſition of them that *deny the Lord that bought them*, made abſolutely neceſſary to the Defence of his Truth; when it is fit to ſatisfie theſe gay Aggreſſors, that God is not ſo ill a Maſter,

Master, nor so meanly serv'd, that no one should have the Gratitude or Integrity to stand up in his Defence: He reckons *Silence* here, to be plain *Denial*; and *Equivocating* Language to be *Rejection of Him*. *Depart from me*, will he say, at the last Day, *ye workers of Iniquity, I know you not*. And tho' they should plead that *they have Eat and Drank in his Presence*, and that *He hath taught in their Streets*; yet, if they have declin'd *Afflictions*, when they lay in the way of *Confessing him before men*; if they have not stuck to him, when they saw the Swords and the Staves about 'em, He *knows 'em not*: They must *depart into utter Darkness, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of Teeth*; where there will be a sad Exchange of Sufferings, from whence no Composition can Redeem 'em; but the fiery Torment, and the gnawing Worm within are both Immortal.

But *Suffering for Conscience sake* is matter of *great Joy*, a solid ground of *Comfort* present and to come.

It is a *Royal Gift* from Heaven; so St. *Paul* tells the *Philippians*, Phil. 1. 29. *To you*, says he, *it is given on the behalf of Christ, not only to Believe in Him, but also to Suffer for his sake.*

It is an *Honour* which the Angels themselves are not capable of Reserv'd to fill up the Joy of an Apostle, *rejoicing that he is counted worthy to suffer shame for Christ's sake.*

'Twas this encouraging Prospect which sustain'd St. *Paul*, and carried him on thro' that noble Path of Virtue, which led him to it, glorifying in Tribulations. *We Rejoyce*, says he, *in hope of the Glory of God; and not only so, but we glory in Tribulation also, knowing Tribulation worketh Patience, and Patience Experience, and Experience Hope, and Hope maketh us not asham'd, because the Love of God is shed abroad in our Hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

'Tis *this Hope* which our Blessed Saviour here gives as the *Ground* of our *Happiness*, and the *Reward* of our *Sufferings*, when he says, *Blessed are ye when Men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you*.

you falsly for my sake. Rejoyce and be exceeding glad, for great is your Reward in Heaven.

And then, if either St. *Paul* knew what to Glory in, or Heaven be worth hoping for; if our Blessed Saviour knew what was truly matter of Joy and Comfort, or if he who only hath the Joys of Heaven to dispose of, can give us an Assurance of 'em; we have Reason to *Glory in Tribulations, to Rejoyce in Persecutions and Revilings for the Name of Christ*, and to promise our selves, that if we *Suffer with Him, we shall also Reign with him in his Kingdom.*

How strangely Perverse then, is the Reasoning of those Men, who bear the *Sufferings* with most *Impatience* which come upon 'em *wrongfully!* It wou'd not trouble 'em, will they say, if they had deserv'd this Usage; then they could have born it patienly: But when they Merit no such Dealing; That, That's the Things that Galls 'em.

Now this is to be *Discontented*, merely because they are in a *State of Blessedness!* Suffering, when we do deserve it of Men, as no Promise, that I know of annex'd to it; 'tis not our Virtue, but our Punishment. Now what a strange thing is it, that a Man shou'd be more content to suffer Justly, tho' That is but and Evidence of his Wickedness; than to suffer the same Things Unjustly, when they both promote and assure him of his Adoption? When the Sufferings, in both Cases, are the same; What is This but to prefer the Guilt and Infamy of a Malefacter, before the Innocence, the Glory, and the Crown of a Martyr?

What one Quality or Consequence is there in Sin, which should make the Burthen of it sit the Lighter? Is the Torture Easier to the Criminal, because attended with his own Self-Condemnation? Is a cruel Death more Tolerable to him for a Moment, because it delivers him over to an Eternal One?

What one Quality or Consequence is there in *Righteousness*, or the *Name of Christ*, which can add Weight

to the Sufferings they bring upon us? Is the *continual Feast of a good Conscience* Then only a Burthen when we have most need of its Support? Or do the Joys of Heaven then open to us, make us Impatient to be out of the Way that leads us to it?

Is it a *Common* thing to see *Sin punish'd*? Is it That which sweetens the bitter Cup? Yet neither is it *New* for *Righteous* Men to *Suffer*. The Conclusion of my Text affords us a fresh Encouragement in the Account it gives us, that *so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you.*

Which of the Prophets have not your Fathers Persecuted? And they have Slain them which shew'd before of the Coming of the Just One, of whom ye have been now the Betrayers and Murtherers, said St. *Stephen* to the *Jews*, when they were about to Stone him; *And he saw the Son of Man standing at the Right-hand of God ready to receive his Spirit.*

Isaiah they Saw'd asunder. *Jeremy* they us'd so ill, that the Prophecy of the very Agonies of Christ, in the 53d. of *Isaiah*, is thought by many Learned Men to be design'd also for a Description of *Jeremy*'s Sufferings.

Thus the very best of God's Saints were us'd, and *cut off from the Land of the Living*, for serving God, when they were not sure they should receive a *special Recompence* for this their Suffering. *Everlasting Blessedness in another Life, as the Reward of Suffering in this*, was peculiarly a *Gospel Promise*: The *Law* clearly Reveal'd none such.

And therefore, when the Saints of God are Persecuted, in the Old Testament, we do not find 'em Comforting themselves with any such Hopes; but with a Prophetical Revenge considering the last End of their Persecutors, encouraging themselves with the Prospect of the Justice of God, which would appear in the Ruin that would shortly overwhelm their Enemies, and with Hopes that God would, after a Time, restore 'em.

Strong therefore, is the Encouragement of *their Example*,

ample, which held out under so much less Support and Expectation! *Canaan* was their Hope, and their *Reward*; and yet they did endure those Persecutions that cut 'em off from the Reward they hop'd for. To be *cut off from the Land of the Living*, was the greatest Judgment that an *Israelite* could fear; and to be *sent to Heaven* is the utmost Possibility of a *Christian*'s Hopes and Wishes. And shall a *Jew* with more Patience and Alacrity receive *his Judgment*, than *We* do *our Crown*? Are our own happiest Wishes more Terrible to Us, than Destruction was to him? And shall a Martyr'd *Israelite* go more willingly to the *Grave*, than *We* will to *Heaven*.

We may be asham'd of that Stupidity which God's Mansions cannot move, when the *Saints under the Law* were mov'd without 'em, and when the *Son of God himself* was mov'd with the Prospect of 'em to undergo bitter Agonies and a cruel Death. For, for *the Joy that was set before Him, he endur'd the Cross, despis'd the Shame, and is set down at the Right-hand of God.*

And the same *Joys* are propos'd to *Us*, if we *will run with Patience the Race that is set before us*: For we have the Word of Truth it self for our Assurance, That *if we be conform'd to the Image of his Death, we shall also be conform'd to the Image of his Resurrection.*

Which God of his Infinite Mercy grant to us all, through the Merits and Mediation of the same Jesus Christ our Lord: To whom with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, Three Persons, and One God, be all Honour and Glory now and ever! Amen.

FINIS.

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